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Bulgaria Tries Two Italians as Spies, Denies Tie to Papal Assassination Case

VIENNA—Two Italians went on trial for espionage in Bulgaria yesterday, although officials reportedly denied the case was a retaliation for Rome's charges of Bulgarian involvement in the shooting of Pope John Paul II.

The trial opened in a Sofia municipal court, but was adjourned after defense attorneys asked for more time to interview witnesses, according to a dispatch from Bulgaria's official news agency BTA.

The agency said the trial of Paolo Farcetti, 35, and Gabriela Trevisin, 26, will resume at a date to be announced later. The two were arrested last August for allegedly photographing military sites.

A report in Austria's respected Die Presse newspaper said Bulgarian officials denied the espionage trial was in retaliation for Italian charges of Bulgaria's complicity in the May 13, 1981 shooting of the pope.

Die Presse quoted Bulgarian Foreign Ministry press chief Georgi Jowkov as saying the two Italians were not brought to trial in reaction to Italy's arrest of Bulgarian Airline official Sergei Ivanov Antonov, who is charged with complicity in the papal assassination attempt.

AROUND THE WORLD

Italian officials also have linked two other Bulgarians to the attack on the pope by Turkish gunman Mehmet Ali Agca.